(e) to what extent this policy will be more beneficial to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (e) The Government of India has reviewed the policy of bilateral development co-operation to affirm the liberalization and reform orientation in India's economic policy. Bilateral development assistance will now be accepted from all G-8 countries, as well as from the European Commission as against six development partners in the erstwhile policy, namely, Japan, United Kingdom, United States of America, Germany, Rusian Federation and European Commission. Further, such assistance will also be accepted from non G-8 European Union countries providing a minimum bilateral aid package of US$ 25 million per annum to India. Other countries not covered by the above policy may continue providing bilateral assistance directly to autonomous instituions universities, NGOs, etc., as before. They may also provide development assistance through UN and Multilateral organizations. They policy also entails a simplified procedure to facilitate the flow of bilateral assistance to nongovernmental organizations and autonomous institutions. The Government of India follows a prudent external debt management policy that focuses on concessional and less expensive debt from multilateral and bilateral sources, keeping the maturity structure of the total external debt under manageable limits, and encouraging non-debt inflows.

Rank of India among Reformers

1934. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that World Bank has applauded our efforts for reforms and has rated India among the Ten reformers in the world;

(b) whether it is also a fact that India still ranks in the bottom quartile among the 145 nations surveyed on the ease of doing business;

(c) whether the apex bank has suggested certain measures to overcome obstacles coming in the way of our growth; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) The World Bank Report entitled "Doing Business in 2005" places India among the top 10 reformers in 2003.

(b) No composite ranking is given to India in the Report. The rankings vary according to the different indicators and no single criterion can be used as a proxy for use of 'ease of doing business'.

(c) and (d) The World Bank in its Country Strategy for India (FY 05-08) has suggested that to sustain the growth in the recent past, dramatic improvement may be required in basic infrastructure and investment climate. Major changes will also be required to ensure effective delivery of basic services in health and education sectors.

Fifth Round Table Conference on Panchayati Raj

1935. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that National Media ignores Rurai India and even when journalists are specifically taken on Government expenses to cover events like Fifth Round Table Conference on Panchayati Raj, none of the Reports of the Conference was published; and

(b) if so, in what way he plans to disseminate news/views about thorough spread of message of such Panchayati Raj Round Table Conference, which are supposed to be vehicle for taking the country to prosperity?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) it is because the mainstream print and electronic media are paying virtually no attention to a series of significant initiatives being taken by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj that the Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Panchayati Raj has publicly voiced his concern at the excessive coverage given to even routine matters in the Petroleum Ministry and an absence of adequate coverage to major initiatives in the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and that affect nearly seventy crore people in the country. Efforts had been made to facilitate the coverage of these initiatives. While these efforts have met with a measure of success, the fact is that media coverage has been far less than warranted for the importance of the exercise and its potential impact on the lives of the *aam aadmi* throughout the country. In order to make up for inadequate coverage during the course of